

EXHIBIT A



December 14, 2016

The Honorable Thomas E. Brandon
Deputy Director
Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives
99 New York Avenue NE
Washington, DC 20226

Dear Deputy Director Brandon,

Pursuant to the Freedom of Information Act, 5 U.S.C. § 552 *et seq.*, I write on behalf of Everytown for Gun Safety Support Fund to request information related to firearms used in suicides that are subsequently recovered and successfully traced.¹

In the United States, suicide and access to firearms are deeply connected. Americans are six times more likely to use firearms to commit suicide than people in other comparable countries,² and within the U.S., more people commit suicide with firearms than with all other methods combined.³ The impact of these premature deaths on the U.S. population is severe: in 2013, suicides accounted for 63 percent of firearm deaths in the U.S. — nearly double the number of firearm homicides.⁴

¹ Everytown for Gun Safety is the nation's largest gun violence prevention organization, with more than 2.5 million supporters. Everytown for Gun Safety Support Fund seeks to improve our understanding of the causes of gun violence and the means to reduce it – by conducting groundbreaking original research, developing evidence-based policies, and communicating this knowledge to the American public and policymakers. Everytown submits this request to obtain information that will help further the understanding of the links between firearms and suicide and potential strategies to reduce firearm suicides.

² Richardson EG and D Hemenway. "Homicide, Suicide, and Unintentional Firearm Fatality, Comparing the United States With Other High-Income Countries, 2003." *The Journal of Trauma Injury, Infection, and Critical Care* 70(1). January 2011: 238-43.

³ Firearms were used in 52 percent of all suicides (270,237 firearm suicides of 517,859 total suicides) from 1999-2013. See: "Fatal Injury Reports," Injury Prevention & Control: Data & Statistics (WISQARS), accessed April 27, 2015, <http://1.usa.gov/1pIXBux>.

⁴ "Fatal Injury Reports," Injury Prevention & Control: Data & Statistics (WISQARS), accessed April 27, 2015, <http://1.usa.gov/1pIXBux>.



Research indicates that the decision to commit suicide is frequently an impulsive one: A study of survivors of near-lethal suicide attempts found that one in four deliberated less than five minutes, and nine out of ten deliberated less than a day.⁵ When a firearm is at hand, the person attempting suicide rarely gets to reconsider: Access to firearms is a decisive factor in converting impulsive decisions into irrevocable realities, insofar as 85 percent of suicide attempts by firearm result in death, compared with 69 percent for suffocation, 31 percent for falls, and 2 percent for poisoning/overdose.⁶ Accordingly, there is some reason to believe that measures to keep people at risk of suicide from easily accessing firearms could save lives.

A previous study of 238,000 recent handgun purchasers in California found they had a substantially increased risk of suicide in the year immediately following the purchase.⁷ That study was limited to a single state, but suggests that a disproportionate share of those committing suicide recently obtained their firearm from a licensed gun dealer. The several thousand guns recovered and traced by ATF each year after attempted or completed suicides provides a unique data set to study this phenomenon further.⁸

To better understand where and when people attempting or committing suicide obtained their firearms, we respectfully request that ATF provide us with records containing aggregate trace data that document the following:

1. Nationwide, the number of each firearm type (pistol, revolver, rifle, shotgun, other) that were used in a completed suicide and successfully traced in 2012 and in 2013;
2. Nationwide, the number of each firearm type (pistol, revolver, rifle, shotgun, other) that were used in an attempted suicide and successfully traced in 2012 and in 2013;
3. For each state, the number of guns that were used in a completed suicide and successfully traced in 2012 and in 2013.

⁵ Simon, T.R., Swann, A.C., Powell, K.E., Potter, L.B., Kresnow, M., and O'Carroll, P.W. Characteristics of Impulsive Suicide Attempts and Attempters. SLTB. 2001; 32 (supp): 49-59.

⁶ "Lethality of Suicide Method," *Means Matter*, Harvard University, accessed April 27, 2015, <http://bit.ly/1xBbJaL>.

⁷ Wintemute GJ, Parham CA, Beaumont JJ, Wright MA, Drake C. "Mortality among Recent Purchasers of Handguns." *The New England Journal of Medicine* 1999 341(21): 1583-1589.

⁸ "Categories Associated with Firearms Recovered and Traced in the United States and Territories," Firearms Trace Data - 2013, <http://1.usa.gov/1y8tHAQ>. Public data indicates that from the 50 U.S. states and Washington, DC, ATF recovered and successfully traced 4,601 firearms from suicides and 1,803 firearms from attempted suicides in 2012, and 5,272 firearms from suicides and 2,028 firearms from attempted suicides in 2013.



4. For each state, the number of guns that were used in a completed suicide and successfully traced in 2012 and in 2013 that were in the possession of the original buyer.
5. For each state, the number of guns that were used in a completed suicide and successfully traced in 2012 and in 2013 that were in the possession of someone other than the original buyer.
6. For each state, the number of guns that were used in a completed suicide and successfully traced in 2012 and in 2013 that that were originally purchased in the same state in which they were recovered.
7. For each state, the number of guns that were used in a completed suicide and successfully traced in 2012 and in 2013 that were traced less than 3 months after first purchase; that were traced between 3 and 6 months after first purchase; that were traced between 6 and 12 months after first purchase; that were traced between 1 and 2 years after first purchase; that were traced between 2 and 3 years after first purchase; and that were traced more than 3 years after first purchase.
8. For each state, the number of guns that were used in an attempted suicide and successfully traced in 2012 and in 2013.
9. For each state, the number of guns that were used in an attempted suicide and successfully traced in 2012 and in 2013 that were in the possession of the original buyer.
10. For each state, the number of guns that were used in an attempted suicide and successfully traced in 2012 and in 2013 that were in the possession of someone other than the original buyer.
11. For each state, the number of guns that were used in an attempted suicide and successfully traced in 2012 and in 2013 that that were originally purchased in the same state in which they were recovered.
12. For each state, the number of guns that were used in an attempted suicide and successfully traced in 2012 and in 2013 that were traced less than 3 months after first purchase; that were traced between 3 and 6 months after first purchase; that were traced between 6 and 12 months after first purchase; that were traced between 1 and 2 years after first purchase; that were traced between 2 and 3 years after first purchase; and that were traced more than 3 years after first purchase.

I would be grateful if you would deliver the materials in electronic form to the address below. I am willing to pay the cost of processing of this request; please contact me at the e-mail address or telephone number below if you anticipate that the cost of processing this request will exceed \$500.00.



Thank you for your prompt response to this request. You may reach me by telephone at 917-238-2091 or email at talcorn@everytown.org if you have any questions or if I can provide any further information. Many thanks again.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ted Alcorn". The signature is stylized with a large "T" and a long, sweeping underline.

Ted Alcorn
Director of Innovation